

Style Meets Function in Luminaire Design

By Carol Lamkins, CID, CMKBD

Lighting enhances interiors with light, texture and dynamic visual content. Light provides an opportunity to create space, manage moods and improve the quality of life. As interior designers, we strive for that perfect balance of functional light and aesthetically-pleasing luminaries that reinforce and reflect the design theme.

Freshome Design & Architecture has examined seven ways that add fashion and flair to bare ceilings. Lighting should provide the inspiring centerpiece of the room. Here are the seven light trends projected by Crystorama, a family-owned design house with a 60-year heritage.

Lighting Trend 1: White is red hot

White is the little black dress of interior design. It is the most versatile tint on the color wheel – equally perfect for an urban loft, a cozy cottage, a kid-filled suburban home or a mountain retreat. White looks great with every wall color and can break up heavy dark wood tones, brightening a space with its color, as well as being a light source. All white glass and hand-cut white crystals bring a vintage feel to a chandelier and are easily paired with a modern room design. Beautiful wrought-iron floral in a high-sheen white finish gives a look that is both modern and retro. An all-white palette can define a vintage space or a sleek modern one.



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Lighting Trend 2: Sculpture for the home

The latest trend is lighting as a sculpture for the home, truly making it a focal point, similar to art. Design inspirations for these types of fixtures come from sculptures and other artwork. Not everyone can afford a piece of artwork for their home. An elaborate light fixture can be the focal point, whether it's hung over the dining room table, kitchen buffet, or in the foyer. Lighting fixtures can be as varied as art itself, helping a homeowner express their personal style and design choices.



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Lighting Trend 3: Mixed materials

Imagine the glamour of old Hollywood combined with contemporary design elements. The mix of metals, crystals, colors, and finishes in light fixtures helps bring a room to life in new and unexpected ways. Lighting fixtures can be as eclectic as any other piece of home décor. If your client's style is hard to categorize, a lighting fixture with mixed materials – glass, crystal, metal, wrought-iron – may be the best decorating solution.



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Lighting Trend 4: Jewelry for the home

Beautiful draping beads, glittering metals, crystals that catch the light – all are elements of fine jewelry, as well as fine lighting fixtures. Like a vintage brooch, a light fixture adds that special touch to each room. Like diamonds, crystals on a chandelier reflect the light and sparkle. Light fixtures are the finishing touch to a room adding glimmer to catch the eye, the same way jewelry is for an outfit. Lighting, like jewelry, can push the envelope and be adventurous.



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Lighting Trend 5: Color-infused glass

Fixtures made of solid glass appeal to homeowners with a modern eye for design. Soft, neutral colors accent the room without overwhelming it. All glass chandeliers are an alternative to traditional light fixtures. Though the shape is traditional, the use of all glass makes it edgy. Blue is today's new neutral lending a quiet sophistication to any room.



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Lighting Trend 6: Location is everything

Chandeliers and pendants have gone main stream and can be found all over the house. Every room is a blank canvas, just waiting for the right lighting fixture. Gone are the days of a single chandelier over your grandmother's dining room table. Interest in home décor and design has led to the use of lighting fixtures in unexpected places. Hang two pendantstogether over a breakfast buffet, a flea market style chandelier in a child's playroom, mini-chandeliers over bedside tables, a sassy chandelier to spice up the bathroom. Note that in California, no parts of cord-connected luminaries, lighting track, pendants, or ceiling-suspended fans shall be located within a zone measured 3' horizontally and 8' vertically from the top of the bathtub rim or shower stall threshold. However, candles could illuminate this type of chandelier.



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Lighting Trend 7: Shady characters

The addition of luxurious fabric shades to elegant chandeliers is like adding an enviable accessory to an already perfect outfit. The result is breathtaking. Structured shades paired with draping crystals create a match made in lighting heaven. Fabric shades soften the glow of the light source, illuminating the room in a warm glow. Mixed textures of fabric, chrome and crystals draw interest and intrigue to the whole room with a fashion forward edge.



LEDs are the lighting buzz word for 2012. Since LEDs are so compact, lighting manufacturers are no longer limited to the same old forms for decorative fixtures. They can now design and fabricate fixtures in new shapes, sizes and configurations than they could with incandescent and compact fluorescent lamps.

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New designs in lighting fixtures go beyond function with a focus on new forms, energy efficiency and artistic details. Here are some current examples in design excellence that can enhance classic to contemporary décor.



CSYS by Jake Dyson, a dimmable LED tabletop lamp, is five times more energy efficient than a comparable halogen bulb. CSYS also offers flexible and precise light direction as it adjusts smoothly and effortlessly through three axes.

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From the Mondo Collection comes the Confetti Chandelier by designer Andreea Avram Rusu, with customizable sizes and finishes and optional Swarovski crystals and semi-precious stones.



The modern Harper Collection from Crystorama includes a chandelier with polished chrome finish with Ice Blue glass.

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Rejuvenation partnered with manufacturer Blenko to recreate this design, highlighting the lamps' bold colors, large scale, and sensuous shapes which were a hit when first introduced in the 1950s.



Designed by Odile Decq, the Petale suspension lamps were developed in collaboration with Luceplan and evoke a suspended petal that spreads soft, smooth white light. The body of the lamp, covered with white fabric, is made with a sound-absorbing panel.

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Jonathan Browning's Twig Chandelier (seen here in bronze; available in other finishes) is inspired by a dormant tree in winter—the fixture is composed of clusters of twigs that were cast from real twigs and bark and natural smoky quartz crystals hand-tied to the branches.



Crystalline Icicles by S. Russell Groves for Swarovski feature a range of linear shapes to reflect colorful, flickering light.

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Stiletto by Corbett Lighting and Disc by CSL® (Creative Systems Lighting).



2011 was the year of cool polished metal, but 2012 has the feel warmer and softer with bronze, gold and copper tones. Corbett Lighting's layered Muse "wows" with a soft Tranquility silver leaf finish and faceted crystals.

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Link by Troy Lighting features a rustic yet contemporary bronze leaf finish, while the Cymbal sconce impresses with hand-forged iron bronze leaf in an Umbria bronze finish.

The ideal solution for any lighting application has to be based upon a balanced consideration of numerous factors – the materials being illuminated, the most appropriate lamp technology, the aesthetics of the setting and environmental constraints.

Guidelines are critical for selecting the right size of luminaire to achieve a balanced look. For use above a kitchen island or table, measure the width of the table (or diameter, if it's a round table); then subtract 12" from that number. This is the maximum diameter or width recommended for a hanging fixture.

Keep in mind that a fixture with a busy or complex design will actually appear larger, so if this is the case slightly scale down the maximum width. For general lighting measure the room from corner to corner in feet; convert this number to inches. This is the ideal width of the fixture.

Although they may be a good source of general light, many chandeliers and pendants are usually not sufficient to light an entire room. Apply lighting layers from multiple fixtures for the best results.

The selection of the right fixtures will result in engaging, surprising and delighting the client. Success comes from the inspiration of the correct fixture complimenting the style of the furnished environment.

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Resources:

<http://www.lighting.philips.com>

<http://www.crystorama.com>

<http://freshome.com>

<http://www.hospitalitydesign.com>

<http://www.styleture.com>

<http://www.lightsonline.com>